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WHAT WE CLAIM IS:

- 5 1. A method for identifying a compound that improves treatment of wounds to skin or another external body surfaces in an animal, the method comprising:
- a) producing a wound in the skin or another external body surface of an animal;
 - b) permitting the wound to heal in the absence of a test compound, or treating the wound with a test compound;
 - 10 c) comparing wound healing in the presence of the compound to wound healing in the presence of the compound; and
 - d) identifying a compound that improves treatment of wounds to skin or another external body surfaces in an animal if the wound heals more rapidly, more completely or less painfully in the presence of the compound than in the absence of the compound.
- 15 2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
- e) comparing wound healing in the presence of the test compound with wound healing in the presence of an aldose reductase inhibitor, wherein the test compound is identified as a compound that improves treatment of wounds to skin or another external body surfaces in an animal if the wound heals at least as rapidly, completely or less painfully in the presence of the compound as in the presence of the aldose reductase inhibitor.
- 25 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the animal is a mammal.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the animal is a human.
- 30 5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the human is a diabetic.
6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the wound is to skin on an animal.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the wound is produced by punch biopsy.

8. A method for treating wounds in a diabetic animal, comprising
5 administering to the animal a compound that improves treatment of wounds to skin or another external body surfaces in an animal in an amount effective to improve wound healing in the animal, wherein the compound is identified according to the method of claim 1.

10 9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the animal is a mammal.

10. The method of Claim 8, wherein the animal is a human.

15 11. The method of Claim 8, wherein the human is a diabetic.

12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the test compound is an aldose reductase inhibitor.

20 13. A method for identifying a compound that improves diabetic neuropathy or neurological disorders associated with diabetes, the method comprising:

- a) producing a wound in the skin or another external body surface of an animal;
- b) permitting the wound to heal in the absence of a test compound, or treating the wound with a test compound;
- c) comparing wound healing in the presence of the compound to wound healing in the absence of the compound; and
- d) identifying a compound that improves diabetic neuropathy or neurological disorders associated with diabetes if the wound heals more rapidly, more completely or less painfully in the presence of the compound than in the absence of the compound.

30 14. The method of Claim 13, further comprising:

e) comparing wound healing in the presence of the test compound with wound healing in the presence of an aldose reductase inhibitor, wherein the test compound is identified as a compound that improves diabetic neuropathy or neurological disorders associated with diabetes if the wound heals at least as rapidly, 5 completely or less painfully in the presence of the compound as in the presence of the aldose reductase inhibitor.

15. The method of Claim 13, wherein the animal is a mammal.

16. The method of Claim 13, wherein the animal is a human.

17. The method of Claim 13, wherein the human is a diabetic.

18 The method of Claim 13, wherein the wound is to skin on an animal.

19. The method of Claim 13, wherein the wound is produced by punch biopsy.

20. A method for treating diabetic neuropathy or neurological disorders
associated with diabetes in a diabetic animal, comprising administering to the animal
compound that improves treatment of wounds to skin or another external body
surfaces in an animal in an amount effective to improve diabetic neuropathy or
neurological disorders associated with diabetes in the animal, wherein the compound
is identified according to the method of claim 13.

21 The method of Claim 20, wherein the animal is a mammal.

32 The method of Claim 20, wherein the animal is a human

39 33 The method of Claim 39, wherein the human is a diabetic.

24. The method of Claim 13, wherein the test compound is an aldose reductase inhibitor.

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25. The method of Claim 2, wherein the animal is a mammal.
26. The method of Claim 2, wherein the animal is a human.
- 5 27. The method of Claim 2, wherein the human is a diabetic.
28. The method of Claim 2, wherein the wound is to skin on an animal.
29. The method of Claim 2, wherein the wound is produced by punch
10 biopsy.
30. The method of Claim 14, wherein the animal is a mammal.
31. The method of Claim 14, wherein the animal is a human.
- 15 32. The method of Claim 14, wherein the human is a diabetic.
33. The method of Claim 14, wherein the wound is to skin on an animal.
- 20 34. The method of Claim 14, wherein the wound is produced by punch
biopsy.